

A COMMITMENT TO CONSERVATION

The people of Duxbury are going to be given the opportunity to initiate a Conservation Program that will significantly affect the quality of life in this community. Reduced to the most understandable terms, we ask you these three questions:

1. Why do YOU live in Duxbury?
2. Are you willing to do something positive to maintain the character of Duxbury?
3. Can you afford, environmentally and financially, not to do something?

Throughout our discussion we will continually refer to these questions, because basically if you do not care where or how you live, then you will see no reason to conserve the place in which you live. If on the other hand you live here because the environment suits you, then we ask you if you are willing to conserve it.

Conservation is many things to many people. President Kennedy defined it as the "wise use of our natural environment, the highest form of national thrift--the prevention of waste and despoilation." The values of open space embraced in the term "Conservation" include at least:

1. A preservation function, by which the natural landscape is maintained for scenic, aesthetic, historic, and educational purposes.
2. An outdoor recreation function concerned with low density use for exercise and fun.
3. A water management function pertaining to water supply, its purity, flood prevention and storage.
4. A design function by which open space serves as the framework around which to construct the built-up areas.
5. An economic function, directly concerned with agriculture, forestry, and the savings in services and capital outlay gained by leaving land open, and indirectly by increasing the value of the whole community by increasing the desirability as a pleasant place in which to live.

Open space is a commodity which Duxbury has too long taken for granted. Perhaps the apparent vastness of the marshes, or the expanses of pine forests encourage this false sense of "nothing is going to happen to Duxbury." Well, it's happening, and faster than most persons are aware. As you drive down the Expressway and cross the South River, you probably don't believe anything will significantly alter your town. And yet right on the doorstep, the South River, there will soon be 85 to 100 homes. The buildable upland with which the Town began (13,075 acres) has been reduced by 38.5%. When, and if, the remainder is developed, some 20% will go into streets, leaving 6,424 acres of upland remaining.

At the present rate of growth, the town will be consumed by about 1990. Many readers will say figures can be used to verify anything, but whether you believe it or not the fact remains that Duxbury will grow and people will move into it for the very same reasons you moved into it. Duxbury is a very pleasant place in which to live--that's the answer to the first question.

Regrettably, Duxbury has not taken many significant steps in order to preserve those very things that make this a pleasant place in which to live. Of the total area of the town (15,600 acres) only 109 acres are set aside for a conservation function--7/10's of one per cent. No neighboring town has done less.

In the year 1963, the building inspector issued 44 building permits. In 1969, a year of supposedly "tight money," 156 permits for dwellings went out. In our prosperity we are consuming land at a rate far in excess of our efforts to conserve it, and perhaps depleting the "capital" that by rights belongs to other generations. Is it right for us, in 1970 to simply stand by and let this happen? Duxbury's inaction perhaps is characteristic of what Stewart Udall calls the "Myth of Superabundance." On the one hand we all tend to love the land; on the other hand the "practical" American has the urge to exploit it shortsightedly for profit. More and more we must establish in Duxbury some natural sanctuaries where commercialism and housing are barred, and where we, and the people who come after us, can again become "land-conscious."

At Town Meeting you will have the opportunity to make a commitment to a conservation program that will make open space the frame upon which the town will develop. We ask you again, "Why do YOU live in Duxbury, and are you willing to do something to conserve it?"

OF Duxbury-Glitter

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